

Parent Document

What is Edmodo?

Edmodo is a closed networking site that is designed with a look similar to Facebook. On it, students and teachers can engage in classroom discussions, students can participate in polls, and receive badges. All assignments, due dates, content, and grades are available in the one site. Parents can also join via a unique parent number and gain access to all work and grades of their children. Many educational apps can be incorporated in to Edmodo. In addition, Edmodo has an active teacher community, and resources and ideas are plentiful with opportunities to network with other teachers using Edmodo.

Why am I using Edmodo?

I have chosen to use Edmodo in my classroom this year as it is a safe and secure learning platform with many benefits. Edmodo provides a way for teachers and students to connect, share content, access homework, participate in discussions, manage due dates, and receive class information online. Edmodo is accessible through any mobile device with Internet capabilities – including free apps for iPhone, iPad, iPod touch and Android devices. Students can access their account from any mobile device or computer, and set up notifications within Edmodo to receive alerts/reminders via text or e-mail. Parents can also sign up for a parent account that is linked to their child's student account, and will help keep parents informed of due dates, assignments, grades, school events, important resources, and any direct communication between your child and me.

While no internet-based experience can ever be 100% risk-free, I will take every reasonable measure to manage expected risks. Having the Limited Access Group for our students allows me to keep the access code private and only share with those students in my class. There is no private chat function in Edmodo, so many of the risks I might anticipate using an online site are minimized. However, student use will be monitored diligently by me to ensure that postings are appropriate and respectful to other students at all times. We will go over key points of the school's acceptable use of technology documents in class prior to using Edmodo so that students are clear about expectations for use. If any student in the classroom violates any of the agreements in these documents, action will be taken to ensure that behavior is modified to suit this online environment.

What's 'personal information'?

"People have different standards of what they consider 'personal' information. Sharing over social media has done a fair bit to reset our expectation. Regardless of personal definition, if the information, data, or content could be used to identify you, it's 'personal information' – though professional or business contact information may be treated separately." 1(Hengstler, 2013). A student's personal information could include: name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address, educational information, and anything that identifies an individual, including photographs. If any information, data or content could be used to identify you it is then qualified as "personal information".

Adapted from original document created by W. Blancher. Changes may occur; this document is current as of terms of service on Sept. 16, 2014. Check with your own school to make sure it meets your school's privacy policy. Review completed by Breanne Quist.

Why is BC so sensitive to privacy laws regarding data?

“Shortly after the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001, the American government enacted the United States Patriot Act that allowed the United States government to search private and public data housed on servers on United States soil. At the time, The British Columbia Medical Services Plan was hosting our provincial medical records in the United States. Unions in British Columbia expressed concern over the ability of the American government to search through British Columbian’s personal medical records and histories. Ultimately, the rule is: if you transfer or authorize the transfer of your personal information outside of Canada, that data is subject to the laws and practices of the country where it sits – be it the United States, China, or India. (Remember that minors, under the legal care of an adult, cannot authorize such a transfer.) Not all locations have similar notions about your right to privacy. Since cloud computing is a relatively new technology, the laws and best practices governing it are still changing and there is a need to stay current.”¹(Hengstler, 2013)

Why is informed consent necessary?

When using Edmodo for educational purposes in BC, there is a possibility that your child may upload, share, store images, text, audio, or other digital content that may reveal his or her personally identity. Various provinces in Canada, and other jurisdictions across the world, have enacted laws to protect personal privacy. In BC, we are covered by the Personal Information and Protection Act (PIPA). It is one of the most defined privacy protection frameworks in Canada. PIPA states that ‘private bodies’ such as independent schools have defined legal requirements for handling your personal information when it is within their ‘custody’ and ‘control’. Generally, private bodies must make sure that your personal information cannot be stored or accessed outside of Canada without your expressed permission – ‘consent’ (Note: there are certain expectations in the law like data covered by treaties, etc.). PIPA states that your consent must be in writing, state to whom your personal information may be disclosed, and how your information will be used. Also, if you post personal information about others, their permission must also be secured.

What if I don’t want to consent?

If you withhold your consent and your child is unable to participate in activities planned that take advantage of the interactive nature of Edmodo, alternative assignments can be provided to ensure that your child’s grade will not be affected.

While no internet-based experience can ever be 100% risk-free, know that I will take every reasonable measure to manage expected risks.

^[1] Julia Hengstler is the Educational Technologist with the Faculty of Education at Vancouver Island University & an Instructor in Educational Technology. Please visit this site for more background information about her:
http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler_j.asp